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ATO Guangzhou goes on the soft offensive when promoting US wine

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Approved By:

Sanchez, Jorge

Prepared By:

Aaron Singleterry

Report Highlights:

This report is the English version of a series of ATO Guangzhou's "soft" promotions for U.S. wine conducted in China's new social media micro-blog platform (weibo.cn). Both reviews emphasized personal experience, culture, and accessibility of U.S. wine. The target audience's knowledge of imported wine is fairly limited. The wines were selected randomly from ATO Guangzhou's wine cellar and there was greater attention placed on the varietal and how to enjoy them, rather than on the production areas or history. Both wines were paired every day dishes mainly to drive the point on the accessibility, drinkability, and easiness in pairing U.S. wines with common dishes and specifically in this case with home cooked meals. The wines reviewed include Washington State's, Columbia Valley, Domaine Ste. Michelle Brut Sparkling Wine and California State's, Lodi, Boogie Old Vine Zinfandel.

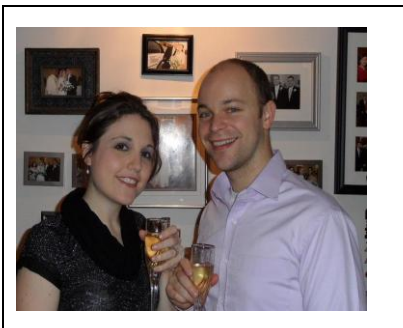
General Information:

Domaine Ste. Michelle Brut sparkling wine paired with baked chicken seasoned with fresh herbs, steamed broccoli, and pappardelle pasta with fresh alfredo sauce



My wife, Megan, and I recently marked our 4th wedding anniversary. We wanted to celebrate it in a relaxed American style with a home-cooked meal accompanied by a nice bottle of wine. We wanted the meal to symbolize the union of our marriage and the joining of our two family heritages, so for the food we recognized my wife's Italian heritage by making [pappardelle](#) pasta, steamed broccoli, and baked chicken all mixed together with a rich, creamy [alfredo](#) sauce, and for the wine we selected Domaine Ste. Michelle's Brut sparkling wine, produced in my home state of Washington for a cost of about US\$10 (read about it [here](#), buy it [here](#)).

Sparkling wine (e.g., champagne) is commonly used in the U.S. as a celebratory beverage to commemorate important events, so it was a natural choice for us. This was our first time pairing it directly with a meal, so we were a little unsure how it would turn out, but the sparkling wine's crisp tartness went perfectly with the alfredo pasta's rich creaminess. The "problem" with alfredo dishes is that they are so rich and creamy that you can only fully enjoy the first bite – after that, your taste buds are so saturated with the flavor that they can't process the rest of the dish. Pairing the alfredo pasta with Domaine Ste. Michelle's Brut sparkling wine fixed that "problem".



The sparkling wine has a crisp, tart, lightly fruity taste that is there for an instant as it cleanses your palate and then it's gone. It's a light and refreshing counterpoint to the alfredo pasta that rinses away those rich flavors and leaves your taste buds ready to fully enjoy bite after delicious bite.

After the meal, we even had enough left over for a celebratory toast to our last four years.

Bold on Bold: Old Vine Zinfandel Is Best with Beef

Zinfandel is a distinctly American variety of red grape that produces robust wine with strong flavors and a relatively higher alcohol content (up to around 15%). An “old vine” zinfandel is produced exclusively from grapes grown on vines that are about 100 years old; as the vines get older, they produce smaller crops, leading to more concentrated and intense wines.



American old vine zinfandel is produced from some of the first vines planted in the U.S., combining the unique American grape with a century of heritage (not very long in China, but an eternity in America!). Some say that the old vine intensity of these wines gives them a romantic passion and intimacy that's ideal for special dates.

My wife and I had a lot of fun on our anniversary experimenting with other wine pairings, so over the course of some more casual dinners we tried [Bogle Vineyard's Old Vine Zinfandel](#) (retails in the U.S. for \$9) with several different dishes – hamburgers, lamb shanks, and steak [porcini](#) pasta. All were excellent, but we felt that the old vine zinfandel went best with the hamburgers. The wine lives up to the “old vine” reputation with a very bold, intense flavor that mingles with the equally bold and intense flavor of the beef juices in a thick hamburger patty, and this passionately strong wine would be even better as part of a romantic Valentine's Day dinner with a medium-rare [USDA Prime](#) steak. To get the most out of this robust wine, you'll need to complement it with a food that has a robust natural flavor.